

Lesson Overview

If you are new to the planning process, you probably have a lot of questions. Where should you begin? What incidents should you plan for? Who should be involved?

This lesson will help you answer these questions.

At the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Identify who should be involved in HazMat planning.
 - Develop a strategy for completing HazMat planning.
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Who Should Be Involved?

Because of the importance and complexity of HazMat planning, participation in the planning process should be broad based. Consider including the following stakeholders in the planning process:

- The State Emergency Response Commission (SERC)
 - The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)
 - Those within the jurisdiction with responsibility for HazMat response
 - Those with whom the jurisdiction will interact during a HazMat emergency
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The State Emergency Response Commission

SARA Title III requires that the Governor of each State designate a State Emergency Response Commission (SERC). The SERC must be broad based and include agencies and departments concerned with:

- The environment and natural resources.
- Emergency management.
- Public health.
- Occupational safety.
- Transportation.

Some States also include public and private groups and associations with interest and/or expertise in Title III issues.

Local Emergency Planning Committees

One SERC responsibility is to designate local planning districts and appoint Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs). LEPCs must include:

- Elected State and local officials.
- Police, fire, emergency management, public health, environmental, hospital, and transportation officials.
- Representatives of facilities that produce, store, or use hazardous materials.
- Community groups with an interest in SARA Title III issues.
- The media.

LEPC Responsibilities

The primary responsibilities of LEPCs include conducting a hazard analysis, reviewing existing plans, and evaluating available resources that could be made available in the event of a chemical accident. Within these broad tasks, LEPCs must:

- Identify facilities that have extremely hazardous substances and transportation routes over which they are carried.
 - Develop methods for determining the occurrence of a release and the probable affected area and population.
 - Develop emergency response procedures, including evacuation and shelter-in-place plans.
 - Designate a community coordinator and facility coordinator(s) to implement the plan.
 - Develop and schedule a training program for emergency response to chemical emergencies.
 - Determine the methods and develop schedules for exercising the plan.
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Internal Stakeholders

Internal stakeholders represent agencies that have responsibility in a HazMat response. To determine internal stakeholders, start by including those specified by LEPCs. There may be others who should participate in HazMat planning.

Consider the officials and agencies listed below as you identify internal stakeholders to the HazMat planning process. Don't limit yourself to this list, though. Consider it a starting point.

- Elected officials
- Fire department
- Police department
- Emergency management
- Environmental agency
- Health department
- Transportation agency
- Public Works department

Other groups and/or agencies that you may want to consider for your planning team include:

- The local agricultural extension agent.
 - The local planning and zoning commission.
 - The jurisdiction's legal council.
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External Stakeholders

Even if you think that a HazMat response will be handled entirely by jurisdiction personnel, there may be some external stakeholders that should be involved in the planning process. For example:

- With what jurisdictions does your jurisdiction have mutual aid agreements?
- Does your jurisdiction have standby contracts for critical supplies?

These are some of the questions that you should ask when determining who your external stakeholders are.

Consider representatives from the organizations below as you begin identifying external stakeholders for HazMat planning. Consider this list a starting point. Feel free to add other organizations that have a stake in HazMat planning.

- Coast Guard (if appropriate)
 - EPA representative (if appropriate)
 - Hospitals and emergency medical service providers
 - Local business leaders
 - Local industry
 - Media representatives
 - Public interest groups
 - School district officials
 - Technical experts
 - Transportation providers
 - Tribal representatives (if appropriate)
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Planning Challenges

HazMat planning is not simple. The planning process itself requires some planning. You can give yourself a “boost” by doing some work up front to get your planning off on the right foot.

Involve the Jurisdiction’s Leadership

Planning is a form of decisionmaking. When leaders don’t take time to understand and get involved, there is little likelihood of success. More importantly, there is little likelihood that the plan will work when implemented.

Decisionmakers need to contribute their guidance and support, especially in the area of integrating the plan among different agencies and organizations.

Tips for Getting Decisionmakers Involved

To gain the support of local leaders, try the tips listed below:

- ✓ **Do your homework first.** Become familiar with the requirements for HazMat planning and response—what needs to be done, by whom, and when. Be sure that you are able to explain and answer questions about the requirements. Present some examples of good and poor responses from your jurisdiction or from the surrounding area to help make your point.
 - ✓ **Get leaders involved early.** Early involvement by leaders will tell those on your planning team that HazMat planning is important to the jurisdiction. Getting their buy-in will add emphasis to the overall planning process.
 - ✓ **Keep leaders informed.** Keeping leaders informed and involved (if possible) will help to focus the planning team’s efforts. It will also help you to avoid “springing the bad news” on the leader if equipment shortages or other issues arise during the planning process.
 - ✓ **Involve leaders in training and exercises.** Involving leaders in training and exercises brings home the importance of HazMat planning—and allows the leader to see first-hand how the plan is implemented.
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Develop an Orderly Approach to Planning

Enthusiasm and drive are important to HazMat planning, but consistency of effort and an orderly approach produce the best results.

The planning process must focus on progress made and how to overcome obstacles.

Remember that to be successful, the focus of planning must be on the plan's implementation!

Tips for Developing an Orderly Approach to Planning

Some tips for ensuring that your planning approach is orderly and systematic are listed below.

- ✓ **Review the existing plan** so that you are aware of how your jurisdiction currently approaches emergency response, what hazards are currently covered, and what response resources are in place. The existing plan will provide the basis for HazMat planning.
- ✓ **Talk to experienced emergency managers.** If you are new to HazMat planning, talk to several emergency managers from adjacent jurisdictions about the planning process, the types of incidents that have occurred, the lessons learned from those incidents, and what those lessons learned mean for planning.
- ✓ **Review the existing hazard analysis** to identify obvious gaps. Pay particular attention to when the hazard analysis was completed or updated. If it is relatively recent (i.e., within the past year), it may be up to date. If the hazard analysis is more than a year old, you will need to identify new threats to the jurisdiction. For example, has a new residential area been approved downwind of an existing industrial area? Has road construction or other changes to the transportation system altered the types or amounts of chemicals passing through or near your jurisdiction?
- ✓ **Don't reinvent the wheel.** Use the jurisdiction's existing plan, and build on it. Plan for response gaps—the aspects of a response that are unique to HazMat incidents.
- ✓ **Make discreet work assignments and milestones for completion.** Emergency planning can seem overwhelming when taken as a whole. Breaking the planning process into discreet steps can help make the process seem more manageable. Assigning completion dates helps the planning team focus its efforts.
- ✓ **Assign the planning team to task forces to develop specific aspects of the plan.** Your planning team may be relatively large and have varying areas of expertise. Assigning team members to task forces that tackle specific aspects of the plan takes advantage of the expertise available and allows the overall planning process to proceed faster and more efficiently. (Be sure to bring the entire team together, as necessary, to talk through issues and ensure coordination of effort.)
- ✓ **Refer to SLG-101.** FEMA has developed SLG-101, All-Hazard Guide to Emergency Planning as a tool to help you through the planning process. The guide provides a good model for planning, describing the types of information that should be included in emergency operations plans and the steps to follow when developing a plan.

Keep the Plan Realistic

Plans should be realistic. During the planning process, you should consider:

- Only those resources that you know will be available given your planning assumptions.
- The most probable response times and consequences for all likely threat conditions.

Being unrealistic will result in a plan that doesn't work—and could result in injury or loss of life. Emergency plans are not “wish lists,” and they should not be used as a basis for purchasing new equipment. There are other processes for that.

Work Toward Community Consensus

Emergency plans are not secret documents—although there may be certain aspects that should not be released for security or other reasons. Wherever possible, give the public time to review at least the Basic Plan and pertinent functional annexes. Try to gain consensus on:

- The hazards faced (e.g., from facilities or along transportation routes).
- The hazards that constitute the highest risk that will receive the highest priority.

When the community is a partner in the planning process, there is a higher probability that the public will take necessary preparedness measures and respond as asked during an actual incident.

Tips for Gaining Community Consensus

- ✓ **Include key community groups on the planning team.** Every jurisdiction has a core group that is interested in public safety. Identifying who is involved and inviting one or more members of the group to participate on the planning team will help to get buy-in from a broader group of citizens.
 - ✓ **Plan during public meetings whenever possible.** There will undoubtedly be meetings that involve information that should not be released to the public, and these meetings should be private. Wherever possible, though, public meetings (or public hearings at key points in the planning process) should be held. Public meetings can help gain the buy-in of the larger community by attaching value to public opinions. Holding public meetings or hearings also lets the public know that the jurisdiction is taking HazMat planning seriously and helps the public understand what is involved in the planning process.
 - ✓ **Invite the public and the media to participate in exercises.** Inviting the public to participate in exercises makes citizens more aware of what is involved in a HazMat response. Inviting the media helps them understand their role in HazMat responses—and sends the message to a broader audience that the jurisdiction takes HazMat responses seriously.
 - ✓ **Make HazMat part of overall public preparedness.** Build public preparedness into the planning process. Make the public aware of what they should do during a HazMat incident.
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Developing a Planning Strategy

The best way to ensure a successful planning process is to develop a planning strategy up front. Experts recommend following a process similar to that used for strategic planning.

What Is Strategic Planning?

Strategic planning:

- Is a future-oriented process of diagnosis, objective setting, and strategy building that is essential to quality management.
- Relies on careful consideration of an organization's capacities and environment and leads to significant resource allocation decisions.

As with strategic planning, HazMat planning is focused on results. The following screens will provide a brief overview of key steps in strategic planning.

Step 1: Determine Needs and Expectations

The first step in strategic planning is to develop a list of needs and expectations. This list should answer the questions below:

- What is the motivation to develop this plan at this time? For example, has the jurisdiction received new or additional resources?
 - What do you want to achieve?
 - How will you know when you have achieved it?
 - What are the fiscal, political, or other parameters surrounding this planning effort?
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Step 2: Conduct Internal and External Assessments

Conducting internal and external assessments of your organization helps to identify performance problems and potential.

Internal assessment will help to identify clear lines of authority and will help to answer the following questions:

- Who's in charge of what? When?
- What are management's goals and objectives?
- Is there full support for planning from top management?
- What are the organizational strengths and weaknesses?

External assessment involves collecting and analyzing important information about threats and trends that could limit or enhance the jurisdiction's ability to implement its plan. Recommended areas for external assessment include the:

- Public's support for preparedness.
 - Demographic makeup of the jurisdiction.
 - Social considerations in the jurisdiction that could affect HazMat planning.
 - Cooperation and support that can be expected from business and industry, surrounding jurisdictions, etc.
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Step 3: Define the Mission

“Mission” is a short, comprehensive statement of purpose. It involves the formulation of a “driving premise” for the jurisdiction and describes:

- What must be accomplished.
- How it will be accomplished.
- For whom.

The goal of developing a mission statement is to help maintain focus by preventing isolated issues from getting in the way of the planning team’s performance.

Step 4: Develop Goals and Objectives

You will derive your planning goals and objectives from your mission statement.

- **Goals** indicate the general changes that need to be made and what the plan will look like in the long term. Goals provide a framework for more detailed levels of planning.
 - **Objectives** describe specifically **what** will be done and **how you will know** when it has been done properly. Objectives are measurable and provide a basis for evaluating your efforts.
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Step 5: Develop a Planning Schedule

The last step in the “planning to plan” process is to develop a planning schedule. Developing a schedule will help the planning team stay on task by providing definite milestones to strive for.

One common technique for developing a schedule is to:

1. Develop a list of the tasks that need to be done to develop a draft plan that is ready for training.
 2. Then, select an “end date” as a goal and work backwards, filling in each of the tasks and completion dates.
 3. Finally, do a “reality” check on the schedule to ensure that it is realistic.
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Lesson Summary

One key factor to successful planning is identifying and involving key internal and external stakeholders in the process. Gaining the involvement of your jurisdiction’s leadership is an important step to gaining support from other stakeholders.

HazMat planning is similar to strategic planning and involves:

1. Determining needs and expectations.
 2. Conducting internal and external assessments.
 3. Defining the mission.
 4. Developing goals and objectives.
 5. Developing a planning schedule.
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